



**Sussex Rural
Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Currents

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WHAT'S ON THAT POLE?

INSULATORS

Insulators prevent energized wires from contacting each other or the pole.

PRIMARY WIRES

These carry 7,200 volts of electricity from a substation. That's 60 times higher than the voltage that runs through your home!

SURGE ARRESTORS

These protect the transformer from lightning strikes.

NEUTRAL WIRE

This acts as a line back to the substation and is tied to the ground, balancing the electricity on the system.

SECONDARY SERVICE DROP

Carries 120/240-volts of electricity. It has two "hot" wires from the transformer and a bare "neutral" wire connected to the pole's ground wire.

GROUND WIRE

The ground wire connects to the neutral wire to complete the circuit inside the transformer and directs electricity from lightning safely into the earth.

TELEPHONE, CABLE TV, AND FIBER WIRES

These are typically the lowest wires on the pole.



Original illustration by Erin Binkley



A Changing Current

By: Chris Reese, President & CEO
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Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative has used its newsletter to communicate with its members for almost four decades. Since then, how people consume information, connect with one another, and keep current with their electric company have all changed significantly. Through it all, we have always looked at our monthly issue of *Currents* as a critical piece of our communications with our members.



In 2023 we will be making changes to our distribution model for *Currents*. You may be wondering: why the change, and why now? One of the main reasons for this change is the fact that many members have switched over to paperless billing, which means they do not currently receive the print version of *Currents*. If you're reading this article online, you may count yourself among this group.

Paperless billing is a convenient option for both members and the Co-op. It benefits the environment by saving paper and ensures that there is no chance of your bill being lost in the mail. As postage rates increase, we are looking for any avenue to create savings for the Cooperative, and every member who switches to paperless billing creates a significant savings in postage — both for us and for you!

We absolutely encourage members to sign up at www.srecbillpay.com to go paperless if they feel it is the best option for them. Next time you're paying your bill online, you can also simply click in the check-box to make the switch to paperless. There are other options that you can take advantage of on this site if you so choose, including automatic payments and quick pay features.

To ensure that all members can still reliably receive their newsletter no matter their billing preference, each issue of *Currents* will now be mailed to you directly, independent of any bill, four times a year. While fewer issues of *Currents* will be hitting your mailbox each year, we will be providing more substance in each issue

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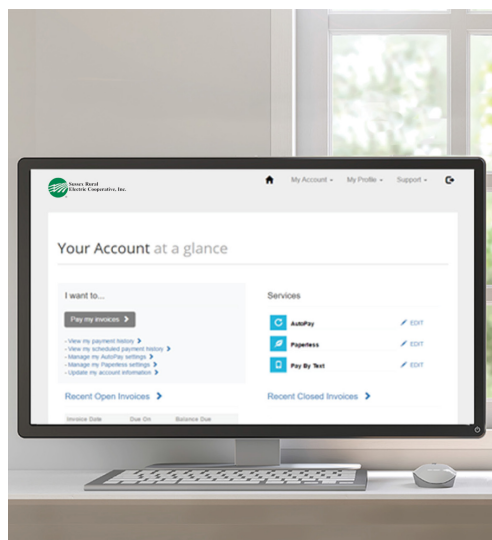
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A Changing Current

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billing today at
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by expanding the newsletter to eight pages. Of course, if you prefer to do your reading on your phone, tablet, or laptop, *Currents* will still be available online too.

This new eight-page format allows for more content in each issue, bringing news, perspectives, and information directly to our members. We can share more in-depth stories, feature more money and energy saving tips, and offer new insights on what it means to be a member of New Jersey's only rural electric cooperative.

In between issues, you can keep up to date with Sussex Rural Electric Cooperative by following us on Facebook (@sussexrec) or Twitter (@SussexREC), or by signing up for our email list at www.sussexrec.com/email. If we need to inform our members about something immediately when it doesn't make sense to wait for the next quarter's issue of *Currents*, our social media and website will be the best place to find that information.

We look forward to sharing this exciting new version of *Currents* with you all. Please be on the lookout for the first issue of this new era of *Currents* coming to your mailbox in late March or early April!

MEDICAL ALERT PROGRAM

Do you rely on electric-powered medical equipment?

Enroll in our Medical Alert Program to receive
advance notice of planned outages.

www.sussexrec.com/medalert

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

LET US KNOW HOW WE'RE DOING:

TAKE OUR MEMBER
SATISFACTION SURVEY

WWW.SUSSEXREC.COM/SURVEYS



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Do you have a home office? Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life.

Another way to save in the home office is to use energy efficient lamps for task lighting. Small lamps use less energy than whole-room lighting.



Downed Lines Mean Danger

By: Steve Sokolowski, Marketing Associate
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Imagine with me a scenario that could happen to anyone: You are driving home after a long day, minding your own business. You're a good driver, you are paying attention to your surroundings, and you are of course following all traffic laws – but sometimes that's not enough to prevent an accident. On the opposite side of the road, a driver veers too far to the right and crashes through a pole, sending overhead power lines falling down to the ground. These types of accidents have a bad habit of catching other drivers in the crossfire.

This kind of accident happens more than you may think. In fact, it happened to me recently on Route 94 in Vernon. I was lucky enough that the power lines fell off and behind my vehicle, so I was able to safely get clear of the area. Once a safe distance away, I stopped to redirect oncoming drivers away from the downed lines while another bystander called the police and checked to make sure the driver who caused the accident was okay. I was thankful that nobody was hurt and that my car only sustained minor cosmetic damage. My license plate experienced the worst of it, as it was blown off my car and flung a good thirty or so feet away.

Let's say you weren't so lucky. These power lines have fallen onto you while you were at a dead stop and are now surrounding your vehicle. You aren't sure how to proceed. Are these power lines energized? Is it dangerous to stay there? Is there a way to safely get out of the car and leave the area? In a stressful and potentially dangerous scenario like this, a million different thoughts and questions can move through your head at once. Even bystanders of an accident like this need to approach the situation very carefully.

Overhead power lines carry thousands of volts of electricity. You should always assume that power lines are live and dangerous. Touching or even getting near a live power line can cause serious injury or death. A live power line can energize the ground and even objects around it on all sides.

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Scholarships & Awards

SREC's scholarships and awards aim to help students succeed, no matter their path. We offer a \$2,000 scholarship for college enrollment, a \$2,000 scholarship for trade school, and a new \$500 award for community service efforts. Application deadlines are approaching fast! Make sure your high school senior applies by **Tuesday, March 7th** at www.sussexrec.com/scholarships!

Downed Lines Mean Danger

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If you are inside of a vehicle with live power lines on top of it or in the immediate vicinity, do not get out! Exiting can create risk of electrocution. While surrounded by downed power lines, your vehicle becomes a part of the circuit that the electricity is flowing through. Because of this, you are safer inside the vehicle than you would be if you tried to get out. Attempting to leave the area by driving over the power lines is also dangerous because it increases the hazards to you and your vehicle.

The safest thing you can do is stay in your vehicle and call 9-1-1. The police will contact the relevant utility company that can cut power to the area and make it safe for you to leave and for utility workers to repair damages. Bystanders should also stay back for their own safety. Staying back, calling 9-1-1, and being available to give statements as a witness to the scene would be more productive than risking your life to be a Good Samaritan.

In the worst-case scenario, damage to the vehicle could cause it to catch fire. This is the only circumstance where it is recommended that you risk exiting your vehicle to get clear of the area. It is possible to do this safely if you avoid creating an "arc" for the electricity to flow through. When you open your door, make a solid jump out of your vehicle with your feet together and your arms folded across your chest. This helps avoid the mistake of touching the vehicle and the ground at the same time. From there, continue to hop with your feet together (both feet landing on the ground at the same time) at least 35 feet to safety. Do NOT walk or run as you normally would! Hopping like this makes you less likely to touch two different voltages of electricity at the same time, which is what would cause shock and electrocution. This same principle protects birds and squirrels from electrocution when they sit on a power line.

Downed power lines are incredibly dangerous. This type of accident can happen in an instant, whether it is your fault, someone else's, or the result of a storm or a fallen tree. That is why it is incredibly important to be prepared by knowing how to stay safe in these difficult circumstances. With all this in mind, you will know how to protect yourself from the dangers of electricity so you can return home to your loved ones safe and sound.

Downed and Dangerous

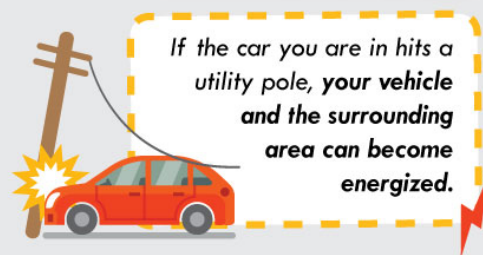
Always assume a downed power line is energized and dangerous! If you see one:

- Notify local authorities.
- Stay at least 35 ft. away.
- Never drive over a downed line, or through water touching one.
- Never try to move a downed line.

KNOW WHAT TO DO



if in an Auto Accident with Power Lines



Even if you do not touch lines or equipment, you can still be killed or seriously injured.



1. Do NOT leave the car, and warn others to stay away.

2. Call 911 to have the utility notified.



3. Wait until a utility professional has told you it is safe.



The **only** reason to exit the vehicle is **if it's on fire.**

If the car is on fire, jump clear of the vehicle: **with feet together, and without touching the car and the ground at the same time.**



Continue to **hop away** with your **feet together** as far as you can.



Learn more at

Safe Electricity.org